



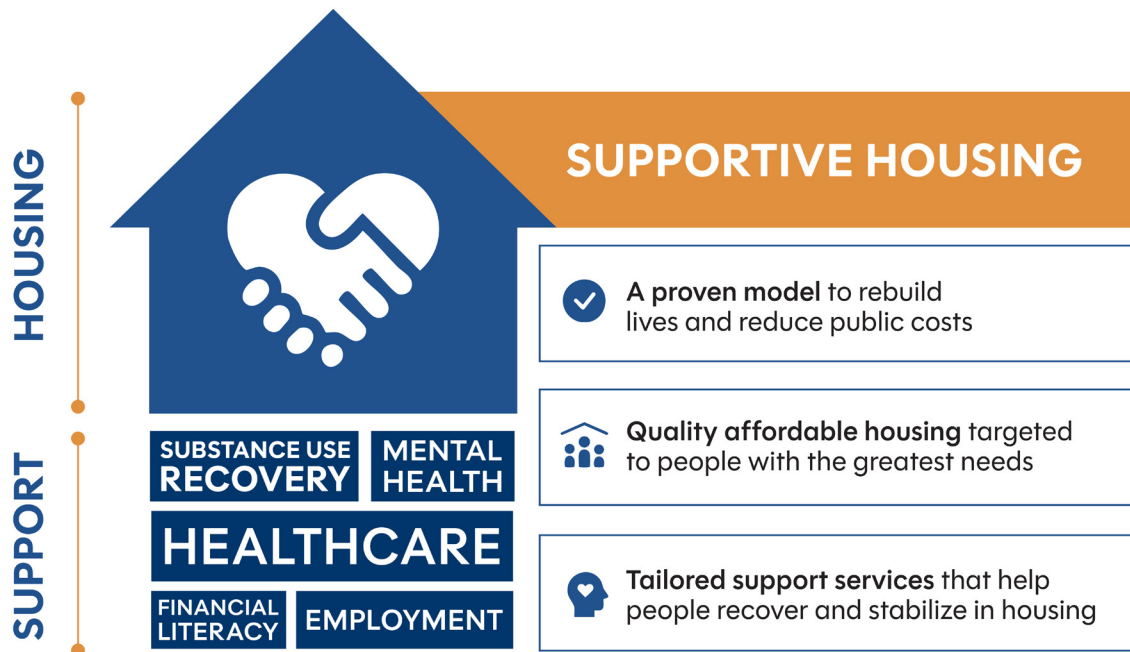
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING EVIDENCE BRIEFS

SUBSTANCE USE



Supportive housing is a model of affordable housing that is designed specifically for people who need services to recover and thrive in their community. It serves people who are facing complex physical and behavioral health challenges while also experiencing homelessness, institutionalization, and/or housing instability. People in supportive housing pay 30% of their income toward rent and are accountable to a lease with all of the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.

The services people receive in supportive housing are intensive and delivered using a low staff-to-client ratio. Services are personalized but typically address mental health and addiction recovery, employment/income, and physical healthcare.



In dozens of studies across the country over the last 20 years, supportive housing has proven to be an effective intervention that improves housing stability, reduces the use of expensive crisis care, and improves outcomes even for individuals with complex needs.

As with the population of people experiencing homelessness, many people in supportive housing are dealing with substance use disorder. The stability that supportive housing provides supports many tenants in accessing substance use treatment and reducing or eliminating their use. **This brief highlights key evidence related to supportive housing and substance use.**



SUBSTANCE USE

Living on the streets can worsen substance use while stable housing helps to promote recovery.

- ✓ When comparing a similar population, people experiencing homelessness had [higher rates and severity of substance use](#).
- ✓ In the [California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness](#), 42% of those who reported using drugs regularly **did not start their use until after the first time they experienced homelessness**.
- ✓ Stable housing can be a critical part of recovery. [SAMHSA](#) includes "home" defined as "having a stable and safe place to live" as one of its four major dimensions of recovery.
- ✓ In [New York](#), supportive housing tenants with opioid use disorder were **much more likely to be compliant with medication assisted treatment** three years later (an evidence-based practice) than those not in supportive housing.



Even when not required to participate in treatment, supportive housing tenants reduce their use of substances.

- ✓ In a [study](#) comparing programs where participants directly entered housing versus directly entering treatment, **supportive housing tenants were 3.4 times less likely to use drugs and/or abuse alcohol** than those in a treatment focused program in the first year.
- ✓ Supportive housing tenants [with histories of alcohol use in Seattle](#) **reduced their drinking by an average of 40%**.
- ✓ In [New York City](#), both recent drug use and current alcohol or substance use were lower among supportive housing tenants than a comparison group.



SUBSTANCE USE

Supportive housing is associated with reductions in substance use related crisis care and increases in use of treatment.

- ✓ [A rigorous Denver study of supportive housing](#) found that **supportive housing tenants reduced their use of short-term detoxification services by 66%** versus a control group.
- ✓ In a [study of more than 1500 adults experiencing homelessness](#) with substance use disorder, **those in supportive housing had fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits for substance use and were more likely to start new substance use treatment** than those not in supportive housing.
- ✓ The Community Transition Program (CTP), funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, provides housing and support to people exiting Ohio's prison system who face substance use, behavioral health, and housing challenges. In the most recent year of data, **more than half of this group accessed substance use treatment. Further, only 1.1% exited to prison.**

Mandatory treatment programs have mixed results and do not solve homelessness.

- ✓ In a [meta-analysis](#), **78% of studies showed no positive impact on drug use or criminal behavior from mandatory drug treatment programs.**
- ✓ [A Massachusetts study](#) showed that **individuals who received involuntary treatment were twice as likely to die as those who voluntarily participated.**
- ✓ Nationally, [research has shown](#) that nearly **70% of people** who were experiencing homelessness when they entered treatment were **still homeless at discharge.**





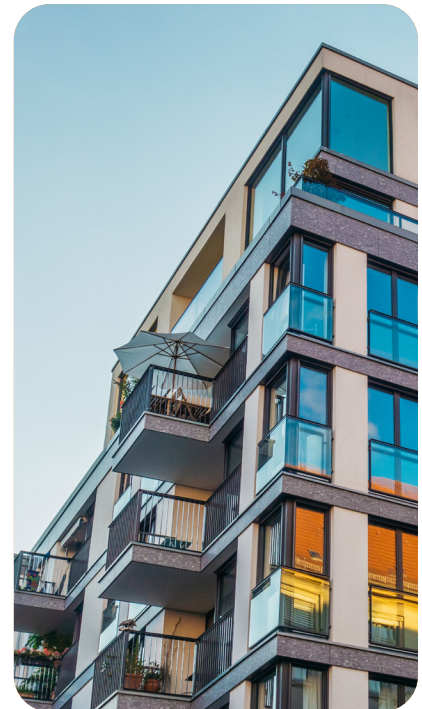
SUBSTANCE USE

Supportive housing results in high rates of housing stability for those with substance use disorders as well as other challenges such as serious mental illness and histories of justice system involvement.

- ✓ In [New York City](#), over **91%** of supportive housing tenants with significant histories of homelessness including histories of illicit drug use were still housed after one year. And these results last, [a 10 year follow up study](#) found that the most common pattern among those with supportive housing was no further jail or shelter stays.
- ✓ In [Denver](#), among a population in which 67% were diagnosed with substance use disorder, **86% were stably housed after one year**.
- ✓ In [Santa Clara County](#), **86% of participants connected with permanent supportive housing remained housed** compared to only a third of the comparison group. Many among this group had chronic physical and mental health conditions as well as substance use disorders.

Supportive housing improves public safety and reduces rates of arrests for crimes associated with substance use.

- ✓ In [Denver](#), those in supportive housing had “fewer arrests for trespassing, drug or narcotics violations, liquor law/ drunkenness, warrants, and other low-level crimes” relative to a comparison group.
- ✓ In [Los Angeles](#), 82% of supportive housing tenants stayed housed for at least a year and relative to a comparison group saw a **24 day reduction in jail days**.
- ✓ It costs [\\$58,000/year](#) to incarcerate someone in the Palm Beach County, Florida jail AND [more than half re-enter the jail within 3 years](#). Not only does supportive housing [reduce jail bookings by more than 90%](#), it does so for a third of the cost of incarceration.





CONCLUSION

Supportive housing is a proven intervention that provides housing stability for people with histories of substance use. It supports people as they access treatment and reduce or eliminate their use of substances. It also promotes public safety by helping people to stay out of jail, especially for crimes related to problematic substance use.

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SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

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JUSTICE SYSTEM

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